

VIETNAMESE AFFAIRS STAFF

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

DATE: 23 Mar 72

TO: Mr. Carl Duckett

FROM: GACarver, Jr.

SUBJECT:

REMARKS:

Attached is the NEW REPUBLIC article I mentioned to you at the 23 March Morning Meeting. All of this is far afield from my parish, but Scoville does use a lot of numbers and details I cannot offhand recall ever having heard or seen outside of the DCI's highest classification briefings before our various Congressional committees. I wonder, hence, if our former colleague has let out of the bag cats that might better have been kept confined.

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Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment  
NEW REPUBLIC article, dated  
25 March 1972, by Herbert  
Scoville, Jr.

CONFIDENTIAL

# "Sufficiency Is Superiority in Another Cloak"

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## Laird's Latest Alarms

by Herbert Scoville, Jr.

"The Soviet Union is continuing to create strategic capabilities beyond a level which, by any reasonable standards, already seems sufficient." So said President Nixon in his State of the World message on February 9. The point can be conceded. The Soviets have strategic forces well beyond those needed to deter a US attack, even if our strategic arsenals continue to increase at a high rate.

But what President Nixon's message did not say is that the US is also building forces greater than needed to deter a Soviet attack and prevent us or our allies from being coerced. The administration policy of "sufficiency" is only superiority in another cloak.

We are now placing MIRVs (multiple warheads which can be aimed at individual targets) on a large fraction of our land- and seabased ballistic missiles. Secretary Laird reports that during the past year we added warheads to our missile force at the rate of almost three a day. MIRV deployment as an alternative to building more missile launchers has long had strong support by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and most of those who are now leading the hue and cry about Russian superiority in missile launchers are ignoring this warhead expansion. Our total offensive force loadings will, according to Secretary Laird, increase between mid-1971 and mid-1972 from 4700 to 5700 weapons while, during the same period, the Russians will only add 400 new weapons to their stockpile of 2100. At this rate, it will be a long time before they catch up.

All elements of our strategic forces are being improved far beyond the requirements of "sufficiency." We are deploying a new generation of missiles in both our land- and seabased launchers when no current threat requires them. We are planning to build still more advanced missile submarines (ULMS) before there is any conceivable danger to the existing ones. We are building a new bomber, the B-1, years before the B-52s will become obsolete. We are deploying an ABM defense of Minuteman missiles which is not needed to preserve our deterrent, and is, moreover, inadequate and poorly designed to protect these missiles if the Soviets do develop a MIRVed ICBM force.

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Over and over again, Secretary Laird and other Defense officials have stressed the *momentum* of the Soviet strategic build-up as justification for these additional weapons on the part of the US. On January 25, Laird prefaced his request for supplemental appropriations in this fiscal year with the statement: "These funds will be used for programs that we need to start now to meet defense requirements as a result of the Soviet weapons momentum."

What is this "momentum"? In his Annual Report of February 15, Laird described the Soviet strategic weapons developments which presumably worry him the most. The following item by item analysis of all of these leaves some doubt as to whether his concern is warranted.

### Continued Deployment of ICBMs

The increase in Soviet landbased ICBMs has in the past always been cited as the dominating element in the threat. The Russians now have 1520 ICBM launchers as compared to 1054 US launchers. Though some 100 new Soviet silos have been identified for new or modified ICBM systems, the build-up has been slowing down. Indeed, Mr. Nixon in his State of the World message noted that the USSR added only 80 ICBMs last year, compared to 256 the previous year. Secretary Laird now projects an increase of only 30 between November 1, 1971 and mid-1972, and points out that the SS-9, SS-11 and SS-13 programs may be over. So the "momentum" in total numbers of Soviet ICBM launchers seems to be petering out.

What about the large ICBMs—the SS-9s which were most feared as potential first strike threats to our Minuteman deterrent? Here, the pace has slowed even more dramatically. In August, 1969, the Soviets were reported to have more than 275 SS-9s operational or under construction, and Secretary Laird predicted an increase of 50 or more per year in then justifying the need for the Safeguard ABM. Now, two-and-a-half years later, he reports that there are only about 300 of these large type ICBMs operational or under construction—hardly a cause for new alarm this year or requiring major increases in funds for new US strategic weapon systems. Included in this Soviet total are the same 30 new large launchers that were first reported under construction in 1967. A new Soviet missile has been tested for these launchers even a year

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later, and even if a new missile were to be deployed in them, it would not signify an increase in previously estimated threat. **Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000700050001-5**

SS-9 is capable of launching any MIRV system the Soviets chose to develop. If they need a different missile to have a MIRV to threaten Minuteman, then our previous worries were greatly exaggerated. It is rumored that the Russians may accept a ceiling on large missiles at SALT (Strategic Arms Limitations Talks). If so, that would publicly commit them to *halt a program they have almost stopped unilaterally.*

Secretary Laird also refers to extensive testing since 1965 of a modification of the SS-9 which would permit it to be fired on a depressed trajectory or used as a fractional orbit bombardment system (FOBS). This was mentioned years ago by Secretary McNamara and is not provocation for increased concern today. Such a system would be less effective than the basic SS-9 in destroying our Minuteman missiles.

## MIRVs

The Russian MIRV program is *now* behind where it was said to be in 1969 by the administration. At that time, Mr. Nixon and defense officials reported that the Soviets had been testing a multiple reentry vehicle system which had a "footprint" that appeared to threaten our Minuteman silos. Now Secretary Laird states that, "while the Soviets probably have not tested MIRV missiles thus far, they have conducted many tests of the SS-9 with multiple reentry vehicles (MRVs) since flight testing began in August 1968. The last MRV tests were in late 1970." What kind of "momentum" is this? The testing of a MRV on the small SS-11 ICBM, or even the deployment of MRVs as recently reported by Laird, subsequent to his report to Congress, calls for no panic. All authorities have conceded that MRVs, whether on the SS-9s or SS-11s, do not endanger our Minuteman. Cries of alarm for three years cannot alter the fact that there is no present evidence that the Soviets have started a MIRV program.

The President correctly states that the Russians have the basic technological ability to develop MIRVs, and this can be the only explanation for Secretary Laird's prediction that the "Soviet MIRV capability could be achieved next year." But there is no factual evidence to support such an estimate since testing has not begun. It would appear that Laird's prediction is even less valid and even more misleading than those made in 1969. For although the Soviets *could* begin testing at any time, it would almost certainly be more than three years before they could deploy any system that could even marginally threaten Minuteman. With the limited number of large missiles that will be available to the Soviets in the near future, such a MIRV system would have to disperse accurately six or more warheads per missile. This is a load capability of the SS-9, but a very long time would be re-

quired before it could be developed, tested, and deployed in significant quantities.

## Submarine Missiles

The Soviets have during the last three years been building up their submarine ballistic missile force. They have 25 operational Y-class submarines, each with 16 missiles; they are turning out additional submarines at the rate of 9 to 10 a year as compared with the eight a year estimated earlier. When all those now under construction are completed, however, they will only have achieved approximate numerical parity with the US. They will still be below the total Western forces, since the French and the British also have small missile submarine fleets. More important, President Nixon recently said that "our missiles have longer range and are being equipped with multiple independently targetable warheads. Moreover, our submarines are now superior in quality." This year, as last year, authorities have referred to a new long-range Soviet submarine missile, but it has been reported that this missile could not be fired from the Y-class submarines unless these are modified.

Since missile submarines are primarily deterrent weapons and cannot be used to attack either the Minuteman or Polaris portions of the US deterrent, it is hard to see how this Russian build-up would justify adding to US strategic forces. Our submarine strategic forces are "highly survivable," says Mr. Laird, and while there are indications that the Soviets are attempting to establish an area surveillance system and associated ASW (anti-submarine warfare) strike forces, they do not as yet have this capability. Other officials have testified that they have not been able to identify any developments that indicate a Soviet threat to our seabased missile deterrent.

None of the reported Soviet weapons programs require the construction on a crash basis of a new submarine missile system (ULMS), which may cost tens of billions of dollars and may be designed to cope with the wrong threat. This is not security; it is insanity.

## Strategic Bombers

Both the President and Secretary Laird have warned of a new Soviet supersonic bomber. What they have in mind is a medium-range aircraft, probably primarily designed for use in Eurasian situations and of little direct threat to the continental US. Laird reports "a probability that it has a capability for in-flight refueling. With refueling it could reach virtually all US targets." He does not say whether these bombers could ever get back to Russia, if they were used against such targets. Again, this is a type of Soviet bomber, about which we have known for several

years, does not require expanded US programs in response. We now have an overwhelming quantitative and qualitative lead in strategic bombers.

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## ABMs

Laird also reports that "construction of the Moscow ABM system has resumed and testing of an improved ABM missile continues." He referred to this resumption last year and to the testing back in 1969. Nevertheless, Admiral Moorer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has just said that the Moscow system, even with improved radars and more and better interceptors, could still be saturated by a very small part of our total missile force. It does not, therefore, endanger our deterrent. The US has apparently been seeking at SALT, ABM limitations at levels greater than the present Moscow system, so it is hard to believe that the administration is really worried about the Moscow ABMs. Furthermore, the Soviets have been eager for an agreement to limit ABMs, and President Nixon has expressed optimism that this can be achieved at an early date, so the long-term danger from ABMs may never develop. If the SALT negotiations break down, the Soviet ABM program still does not warrant increases in US strategic force levels for many years. We have ample lead time to put into effect any necessary countermeasures.

The deployment of a widespread space tracking system that would enable the Russians to predict the position of near-earth orbit satellites is described by Secretary Laird as a Soviet research and development effort worth mention. Presumably this system is composed of the same surveillance radars that a year ago he sought to associate with a Soviet ABM system. Apparently, the association is no longer considered quite so valid, and the fears generated in some quarters in past years are no longer as great. A space tracking system is not a major security threat; the US has had one for more than 10 years.

In sum, in its current round of budget requests the administration has been crying wolf: it has not come forth with a single new development in the last year that in any way demonstrates a new threat to our strategic deterrent. The Soviet ICBM program is winding down and its MIRV program is many years behind original predictions. Only in the area of submarine missile deterrent systems has the Soviet program continued to roll forward, and here the US is more than one generation ahead. The Russian strategic weapons programs are continuing, but their momentum is faltering.

In contrast, we have been moving forward with increasing speed on all fronts. We are deploying MIRVs rapidly so as to increase our force loadings at the rate of 1000 warheads per ICBM. We are developing new guidance systems for these MIRVs. We are de-

ploying a new model ICBM, Minuteman III, and modifying our submarines to fire the new Poseidon missile with a payload four times as large as the Polaris. We are not building any additional missile launchers, but no one has seriously advocated our increasing these for many years. We have a far more extensive anti-submarine warfare program both in terms of deployment and in terms of research and development than the Soviet Union. We are proposing to commit large sums to a new missile submarine (ULMS), though our present system is far superior to the Soviet Union's. We are building a new intercontinental bomber. We are proceeding with an expanded ABM deployment and carrying out extensive research and development on next generation systems. Restraint in US weapons programs is hard to find. The administration ought to drop the double standard by which it evaluates US and Soviet strategic weapons.